

# The Christian News-Letter

Edited by  
J. H. OLDHAM

September 8th, 1943

**D**EAR MEMBER,

The cause of international Christian co-operation could hardly have suffered a more crippling blow than has befallen it in the sudden death, following on an operation, of Dr. William Paton.

## WILLIAM PATON

It is not only that he possessed in rare combination gifts which it would be hard to match, but that, through service in India and subsequent visits to that country and to the Middle and Far East and through frequent travel to North America and the Continent of Europe, he had formed through twenty years bonds of friendship and mutual confidence with the leaders of the different Christian Churches throughout the world. Through these wide contacts he acquired a breadth of vision, ripeness of experience and maturity of judgment which made his counsel of quite exceptional value to the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches, of both of which he was one of the joint secretaries, and to the recently formed British Council of Churches to which he was able in war time to devote a substantial part of his abundant energies.

One is apt from outside to think of these organs of co-operation as functioning more or less automatically, like machines, once they have been set going. Actually co-operation between the Churches is a new, tender and delicate growth. There is no reason whatever why the separate, independent bodies which co-operate in these organizations should continue to hold together unless fresh reasons for doing so are continually provided. The creative activities which supply these reasons require persons with imagination, capacity and freedom from other responsibilities to initiate and conduct them in a way that inspires general confidence. When the international conferences of representatives of the Churches at Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937 decided that steps should be taken to form a World Council of Churches, and an international meeting was held in Holland the following year to prepare a plan, the deciding factor for many concerned was that the services of Dr. Visser 't Hooft, Dr. Paton and Dr. H. S. Leiper could be secured as the joint secretaries. The general confidence they inspired made the move possible.

My friendship with Bill Paton began more than thirty years ago, when for a decade he was the missionary secretary of the Student Christian Movement in this country, and our common interests brought us into constant contact with one another. In 1921 he accepted an invitation from the Y.M.C.A. in India to take charge of its national

work for students and to help to develop an Indian Student Christian Movement.

I visited India about the same time on behalf of the International Missionary Council, of which I was the secretary, landing in India a month after Paton. The purpose of my visit was to find out how the National Christian Council of India, which had been formed as the result of a visit by Dr. John R. Mott just before the last war, and which represented all the Christian Churches and missions in India except the Roman Catholic, might be strengthened and provided with an adequate staff. I visited all the eight provinces of India and discussed the matter with leading Indian Christians and missionaries in each. When the National Christian Council met it became clear that notwithstanding the shortness of his Indian experience the one man whom everyone trusted and wanted as secretary was William Paton. Indian Christians and missionaries were equally decided about the matter. The difficulty was how he could be released from a highly important work which he had entered upon only a few months before. Those in charge of the student work of the Y.M.C.A. were men of wide vision and decided that the larger good of the Christian cause as a whole must have precedence.

The following incident illustrates the spirit of co-operation which prevailed. During the meetings of the National Christian Council the three leading Anglican bishops in India asked if they might have a talk with me. They told me that it was in their view essential that there should be in India such a body as the National Christian Council; that, if it was to be effective, it must obviously have at least one full-time officer; that they, like every one else, were convinced that Paton was the man for the job; that it was plainly very difficult for the Y.M.C.A., having brought Paton out to India for an important task, to release him after only a few months; and that—so important did the whole matter seem to them—they wanted me to know that if there was any man in the service of Anglican missions, whom the Y.M.C.A. would be willing to appoint to the student work and so find it easier to release Paton, they would do everything in their power to facilitate the transference of that man to the service of the Y.M.C.A.

After Paton had been in India for five years and had placed the National Christian Council on a solid foundation, the International Missionary Council found that the only way in which it could hope to cope with the tasks opening before it was by re-enforcing its staff. Once again the thoughts of all concerned turned to Paton. The only ground for hesitation was a reluctance to take him away from India, where he counted for so much. The deciding factor in a difficult decision was his duty to his six young children. He joined the staff of the International Missionary Council in 1927. For ten years we enjoyed a close colleagueship, till the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State in 1937 made demands which took me from the service of the International Missionary Council. While from that time we served different organizations, they were so closely related that we remained in constant touch with one another and our collaboration was increasingly close in recent months.



By every human calculation the whole Christian front has been seriously weakened by the removal of William Paton from a key position. It seems certain that important things that his imagination, initiative and executive ability would have made possible will in fact remain undone. He was equipped in a unique degree to take the lead in re-creating international friendships and international co-operation after the war. Nothing is gained by disguising from ourselves that the effects of his loss will be grave and far-reaching. It is a mistake to suppose that Christians and Christian causes are exempt from the tragic element in human life which allows particular incidents to have catastrophic consequences. To take the most obvious illustration, the death of the Prime Minister in 1940 might have changed adversely the whole course of the war.

So irremediable a loss is a reminder that God's ways are not our ways. To know how little we see of the total picture and how far astray may be our estimate of what is important, and to trust where we cannot see, is, perhaps, the beginning of wisdom. We may believe also that we are nearer to the truth of things when we do not dwell too much on what we have lost, but rather give thanks to God for His gift of William Paton to the universal Church.

## COMMUNIST TACTICS

The following letter has reached me from "Nicodemus," the author of *Midnight Hour*, who has just published a volume of essays entitled *Renascence*,<sup>1</sup> which are studies of some of the main movements in the thought of to-day and seek to "relate real religion to real life," and which he has done us the honour to dedicate to the Christian News-Letter:—

"Alice Cameron, in a Supplement to the C.N.L., writes of 'certain communist methods,' i.e. that of 'discrediting fellow workmen or labour representatives with whose ideas or influences the Party do not agree, traducing his motives and exaggerating or misconstruing all his actions in an evil sense,' and of 'using' people, in the sense that 'someone who apparently has nothing in common with them is suddenly courted and caressed until he has given them some support or help, after which if he is no longer useful he may be dropped.'

"What seems surprising to me in this account is, not the great probability that it is true, but the naïve assumption that such conduct is confined to communists. I have little knowledge of communists and, therefore, cannot check the veracity of her statement, but if it were to be applied to circles of distinction, culture and even religious repute in our world, perhaps to many of those who will read this Supplement and rejoice at such a confounding of communism and be comfortably confirmed in their conservatism and anti-communism, every word of it could be endorsed. It is the normal method by which those in power, position or authority discredit, use and drop those who will not conform or who threaten their security of mind or estate. The only difference between the conservative (and often enough the christian) and the communist is that the former is mostly either unconscious of what he

<sup>1</sup> Faber and Faber, 8s. 6d.

is doing or deceives himself as to the political or religious necessity of such conduct, while the communist (like the nazi and fascist) knows quite well what he is doing and does not pretend that it is a moral method. On the whole, the candid cynicism of the communist seems more pleasant than the covert kind of his opposites.

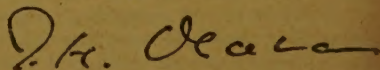
"This is just plain original sin. When first one realizes it as the ubiquitous thing it is, as most rampant where virtue, piety and repute seem most plausible, as, to our horror, a blindworm in ourselves crawling its corrupt way through all our most cherished 'good works,' one is liable to 'curse God and die' till one looks at the Cross where this slimy thing was slain. Then we can face the nasty facts of human nature with that charity which, as Pascal said, is God's realism. But for God's sake, don't let us run away with the idea that the broad phylacteries of the conservative, the Christian and the gentleman make him more immune from such 'methods' than the communist, or use a stick with which we should beat our own backs to belabour political opponents."

This is a most salutary warning against our inveterate tendency to locate evil in those whom we dislike and to forget its ubiquitous nature and its presence and power in ourselves. This does not mean—nor, I am sure, does "Nicodemus" mean—that we are to dismiss as unimportant all differences between nobler and baser traditions in the social and political spheres. Miss Cameron's purpose was to call attention to the significance of these differences in one particular instance.

## THE SUPPLEMENT

The Supplement this week deals with the responsibility of power in the economic system. It has been prepared by a small group associated with the Christian Frontier, the members of which are all connected in one way or another with industry and are all young. The purpose of the present paper is to define the problem by an analysis of economic power and its relevance to existing conditions. No suggestions of reforms or remedies are put forward at this stage. The group intends to continue the study of the subject. If any of you have anything to contribute to the discussion, it will be passed on to the group for their consideration.

Yours sincerely,



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## RESPONSIBILITY IN THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM

### I. INTRODUCTION

To-day one of the chief obstacles to the acceptance of Christianity is the widespread feeling that it is irrelevant to the principal problems facing modern society. People are conscious of the extent to which their lives are conditioned by economic and social forces which are beyond their personal control. Among young people, particularly among the more intellectually curious, the primacy of these forces is accepted as a matter of course. The laws and traditions and institutions of society are believed to be a reflexion of its economic structure. Men behave according to their "class patterns." Evil derives from faults in the economic structure. The good society will be achieved by the right economic organization.

This is, of course, a gross simplification of this type of current thinking. But in a more or less explicit form, it tends to colour the outlook of a majority or at least a very large minority of people in this country to-day. One of its most widespread expressions is the belief that democracy is a sham, that the whole system is manipulated by "sinister vested interests," that effective power does not lie with a responsible parliament, but with an irresponsible clique of financiers and directors, and that any proposals for reform and reconstruction which do not alter the effective control of power are just sops to keep ordinary people quiet. This sense of separation and sham at the core of society has been summed up in the phrase "We and They"—"We" the community, the people, the ordinary chaps, the little men; "They" the bosses, the rulers, the vested interests, the ruling clique.

This state of mind is particularly disastrous to all attempts made by Christians in positions of power and authority to bring their Christianity to bear on the life of the community. In a variety of meetings—for example, in all the various Religion and Life Weeks—Christian business people, Christian leaders in many walks of life, have come forward and stated their belief that only a return to Christianity can solve the problems of peace and reconstruction. The trouble is that given the cynical and sceptical mood already analysed, these statements can do more harm than good. They can help to identify belief in Christianity with the wish to preserve the present power relationships in society. This is, no doubt, a very unjust interpretation of excellent intentions. The fact remains that it is made. And as long as it continues to be made, the Christian witness of men in positions of economic power and responsibility will strike the people they most wish to convert as at best irrelevant and at worst dishonest.

This is the first reason why Christians must face the problem of economic power. There is another. Whatever their attitude to the particular problem of economic power, Christians cannot afford to be indifferent to the problem of power in general. Power—the ability to impose one's will on other human beings or to take decisions which will

affect their lives—is the great corrupter. It leads most easily to the worst abuses of the worst sin, pride. What feeds pride more fully than the ability to impose decisions on others? What gives a man a greater sense of self-aggrandisement than the realization that other men must obey his will? Wherever the exercise of power is inevitable, the Christian conscience must be most alert and vigilant.

## II. CHRISTIANITY AND POWER

Power is, as we have suggested above, the capacity to impose one's will on people either by controlling them directly or by taking decisions which will affect their lives and interests.

Christianity teaches that all power is from God and that man only holds it in stewardship. Man uses power legitimately or responsibly when he uses it for the purpose God intended it to be used. For example, St. Paul speaks of magistrates being set "for the punishment of evil-doers." The purpose for which they may use their power—in other words, the proper *function* of their power—is to punish the guilty. If they used their power for any other end or purpose—for example, to put political opponents in prison or even for a morally unobjectionable purpose such as conducting a Brains Trust in the courtroom—they would be using their power illegitimately or irresponsibly.

It is not enough however for power to be used for its proper end. The means employed must also be legitimate. For example, a magistrate may not use bribery and corruption to convict a criminal, however guilty.

The problem of power is not solved for the Christian simply by the statement that legitimate power—power used responsibly—is power directed towards its proper end and employing nothing but legitimate means. Christianity's dual insight into the nature of man places further limitations on the use of power. Each man is a potential child of God and of value in God's sight—he has a life *to live* and does not exist to be made a tool: so power must not be exercised in such a way as to eliminate his capacity for choice and decision. If we did not believe in the value of individuals, we could plan ruthlessly without regard for their welfare.

Man is not only infinitely valuable; he is also a sinner and liable to misuse his power over his fellows. Even when he is a good and virtuous citizen, his mind is finite and he can still be mistaken about the proper function of the power vested in him. This is why the idea of responsible power must include not only the defining of its proper function, but also the safeguards and guarantees accompanying its exercise to make sure that it is not abused. To return to the magistrate, it is necessary not only to define his function—punishing evil-doers—but also to lay down the regulations covering his appointment and dismissal which will in fact ensure that he does use his power responsibly.

Actually we are perfectly familiar with these ideas and distinctions in relation to two very important examples of power—political and military power. Our system of political government is designed to limit political authority to its proper functions. For example, there is no state control of opinion, and, broadly speaking, the civil liberties are



recognized. It is also designed to make the government representative, and to associate ordinary citizens with it. Military power is also subordinated to its proper function, that of making war effectively on those whom the nation has decided are its enemies. No general can claim, say, because he is experienced with tanks, that he ought to decide whether to make war on Germany or France. Military power is recognized to be subsidiary to the political will of the community.

Finally, it is no solution for the individual to refuse to accept power or for society to evade the responsibility for its conscious organization. The exercise of power is an essential part of social life. The avoidance of overt centres of power may merely open the way to more subtle forms of tyranny or lead to the irresponsibility and frustration of unorganized individualism—the state of helplessness which we see in an unregulated traffic block.

### III. ECONOMIC POWER

Economic power is genuine power. Those who hold it directly control their subordinates, and their decisions—or failure to take decisions—affect the lives and interests of millions of other men.

According to our previous definitions, economic power is exercised legitimately and responsibly when it is directed towards its proper end, when the means it employs are legitimate and when proper safeguards and guarantees exist to ensure that it will not be diverted from its true purpose.

The first question is, therefore: what is the proper end, purpose or function of the economic system? To this the Christian answer is: *to satisfy the needs of the consumer*. It does other things as well—for example, it provides jobs or maintains the export trade—but these do not represent its fundamental purpose. The truth of this can be seen by trying to make the consumer a means and not an end. Could one say, “The proper function of consumers (i.e. men and women) is to provide mouths and bodies which the economic system fills or clothes”? Could one say, “The reason for producing this house is not to give John Smith (the consumer) a home to live in, but to provide Joe Brown (the bricklayer) with a job to work at”?

Even where the economic system is not producing directly for consumption—for example, a firm making machine tools—it is only a question of following the industrial chain down far enough until the proper object of economic power appears—the need of the man who wants to buy the lawn-mower which used the cogs which the machine tools turned out.

The means of fulfilling these needs—in other words, the whole industrial process—entail a number of secondary responsibilities—the well-being of the workers, the interests of shareholders and of other producers and distributors in the industrial chain, and the general interests of the community in such matters as amenities.

### IV. WHO EXERCISES ECONOMIC POWER?

The basic structure of all business undertakings, whether they are public corporations, co-operative societies or one-man businesses, is roughly the same. There are:—

The employees : manual, technical, managerial ;  
The shareholders who provide the capital ;  
The " higher control " : owner, board of directors, or, as in the Co-operative movement, management committee, etc.

Outside the actual structure of the undertaking, but related to it there are other groups :—

Consumers, who use the goods or services produced by the undertaking ;

Suppliers, who provide it with raw materials and " producers' goods ; "

The national community which may be affected in various ways by the economic reactions of what the undertaking does ;

Various other groups who may be affected in special ways by the activities of the undertaking—e.g. local residents who may be affected by noise, smoke, etc.

Sovereignty within the undertaking is exercised by the higher control. They determine the scope and direction of economic activity and the actual things which the undertaking does. It is to them that the management is directly responsible and, on most matters, they form the final court of appeal. The power of the higher control is, however, modified and limited in various ways. There are other competing powers, for example, Trade Unions, who exercise a degree of power in questions of wages and conditions. In certain cases local authorities or the Central Government exercise overriding powers. All the time, too, the decisions of the higher control are limited by economic considerations—the necessity of keeping the firm solvent. Yet most of these limitations are negative ; they determine what the higher control *cannot* do. The power of initiative and positive decision lies, in the main, with the higher control.

The main distinction between the different forms of industrial organization lies in the constitution and accountability of the higher control. In a *municipal undertaking* the higher control is a committee of a local authority, ultimately responsible to the local government electorate. In a *co-operative society*, the higher control is a committee elected by the consumer-members. The extent to which this formal responsibility is realised, in fact, depends upon the efficiency of the management and the vigilance of the electorate to which the higher control is ultimately responsible. In addition, there are many examples of *public corporations* with different forms of control and constitutions ; in these concerns the higher control is usually indirectly responsible to the public through various public authorities.

The typical institution of the economic life of this country is the private or public company registered under the Companies Act—which, for the sake of simplicity, we will call the *private corporation*. Control is vested in the board of directors, who are nominally responsible to the shareholders and are wholly or in part elected by them. In fact, authority is very rarely equally concentrated in all the directors. One among them or a group of them usually wield effective power, either by controlling a majority of the shares with voting rights, or by occupying a pivotal position between different groups of shareholders, or by virtue of personality and ability.



The power of the directors is itself limited if the firm is controlled by a holding company or by some form of "remote financial control," or again if it is part of a trade association which fixes prices and quotas.

It is necessary to underline here two important ways in which the authority of the higher control can be very considerably limited. On the whole, it is true to say that in this country the access of private corporations to two of the means of production—capital and land—is controlled by other, independent private interests. In parenthesis, it may be said that access to the third means of production—labour—is not circumscribed to the same degree because the position of a man with labour to sell is not so strong as that of men with capital or land at their disposal. The degree to which labour is a limiting factor depends—as was suggested above—on Trade Union strength, and on such questions as the rareness of and need for the skills the worker can offer or the extent to which they are needed by the employer.

The necessity of acquiring capital and land are very serious limiting factors. The financiers who have supplied the capital may insist on taking an active part in the policy making of the higher control. Land owners may use their monopoly position to hold up to ransom a new or an expanding undertaking in search of an industrial site. In both cases, interests outside the higher control are in a position, actively or negatively, to limit its field of action.

#### V. IS ECONOMIC POWER BEING EXERCISED RESPONSIBLY?

The power of the private corporation is not *apparently* responsible to the consumer or to society, but to the shareholders. Their claim to control rests on a double basis:—

- i. The claim that power properly rests with the ownership of private property.
- ii. The claim that the private corporation in pursuing the interests of its property owners (i.e. shareholders) in fact fulfils its function of satisfying consumer needs.

The traditional Christian justification of ownership according to Aquinas only applies when property, as a right of administration and distribution, is *personal*.<sup>1</sup> By this test it is questionable whether, since the passing of the Limited Liability Act, shares are property in the old sense at all. When an industrial concern took upon itself the guise of a limited liability company, ownership in the true sense really came to an end. Yet, thinking in the past, we made power in limited liability companies (which are public bodies and immortal at that, unless they

<sup>1</sup> "Two things are competent to man in respect of exterior things. One is the power to procure and dispose them, and in this regard it is lawful for man to possess property. Moreover, it is necessary to human life for three reasons. First, because every man is more careful to procure what is for himself alone than that which is common to many or all: since each one would shirk the labour and leave to another that which concerns the community, as happens where there is a great number of servants. Secondly, because human affairs are conducted in more orderly a fashion if each man is charged with taking care of some particular thing himself, whereas there would be confusion if everyone had to look after any one thing indeterminate. Thirdly, because a more peaceful state is ensured to man if each one is contented with his own. Hence it is to be observed that quarrels arise more frequently where there is no division of the things possessed."

"The second thing that is competent to man with regard to external things is their use. In this respect man has to possess external things, not as his own, but as common, so that, to wit, he is ready to communicate them to others, in their need. Hence, the Apostle says (I Tim. vi. 17, 18): 'Charge the rich of this world . . . to give easily, to communicate to others,' etc."

(*Summa Theologica* II. 2.)

commit suicide) responsible to shareholders, supposing them to be the owners. Limited liability destroys the essential, or at any rate the socially justifiable, character of property, especially with the development of widely dispersed transferable shares. Its impersonal character is best illustrated by the fact that voting rights now belong to *shares* and not to people. The fact that "one share—one vote," not "one man—one vote" is the basis of the system destroys the *personal* basis of the power and incidentally makes possible all sorts of agglomerations and concentrations of power within the firm itself. Thus it seems the argument that power in industry should be responsible to shareholders because power is an adjunct of property falls to the ground.

It should also be noted that Christian tradition distinguishes sharply (as does St. Thomas in the section quoted from the *Summa Theologica*) between the right to *own* property—this is personal and private—and the right to *use* property—which is social. Christianity does not admit that any property can be considered apart from its proper social function. The really important argument thus lies in the claim that "the private corporation in pursuing the interests of its property owners (i.e. shareholders) in fact fulfils its function of satisfying consumer needs."

The justification of the private profit motive is that in a competitive system private profit and a free price mechanism are the most sensitive economic instruments for registering consumer needs. The term "profit motive" is used here, not in the sense of individual acquisitiveness, but to describe the reliance on the test of profitability ("does it pay?") as a measuring rod and directive of economic activity. The classical argument runs that people do not buy what they do not want. Competition keeps prices down. Disequilibrium is adjusted by the automatic working of supply and demand. This is the vindication of the system of private enterprise—not that it has any special sanctity of its own, but that it is the best technique for fulfilling the proper function of economic power, that is to say, the satisfaction of consumer needs. The checks or guarantees which ensure that the private corporation exercises its power responsibly are provided by competition with other firms and by the need to remain solvent. The shareholders whose interest it is to see that the undertaking pays its way unconsciously act in the public interest. Their vigilance prevents the waste of resources or their direction to other than consumer needs. This is the justification of making private corporations responsible to them.

## VI. SIGNS OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

There is no doubt that over a very wide field the system of private enterprise has fulfilled its primary function of meeting consumer needs and it has done so with certain subsidiary benefits—decentralization of control and decision, flexibility, individual responsibility. But the points where the system fails are obvious. If they are not remedied, the system cannot be called responsible. The following examples do not pretend to be exhaustive.

### A. Primary Responsibility to the Consumer

i. The producers themselves have tended steadily away from conditions of free competition. It was often with the justified desire to get away from ruin, waste and anarchy. Nevertheless, it has removed



the only automatic economic check upon the irresponsible use of economic power. Wherever a monopoly exists or wherever a trade association can use its powers to fix prices, there is no sanction—institutional or otherwise—to guard against such abuses of economic power as the protection of the inefficient producer or the securing of excessive profits by fixing prices at too high a level.

ii. The development in industry of the need for very costly fixed capital, often with highly specialized machines, has lessened the sensitiveness of the economic system to consumer needs. If a capital loss is to be avoided and profits are to be maintained, the goods must be sold, even if unwanted. There has thus been a development of high powered and costly advertising. The phrase "sales resistance" is an apt commentary on the responsibility of these procedures.

Another consequence of the growing cost and rigidity of the capital structures of industry can be illustrated from the problem of obsolescence. There is no automatic check in private enterprise to ensure that the community avoids two opposite forms of economic loss. The one occurs when the introduction of new methods or techniques is blocked indefinitely by those who have vested interests in the continuance of old methods and the maintenance of old plant. The other occurs when a new method is introduced too quickly and the cost of scrapping obsolescent but still valuable machinery outweighs the saving introduced by the new machines.

iii. Resources are still scarce relatively to people's real needs. These needs are only registered in the market when they are backed by purchasing power. Since purchasing power is distributed very unevenly, effective demand for luxuries may be greater than effective demand for necessities and scarce resources will be diverted from primary to secondary needs. A private profit system does not regulate this automatically, for it registers what people can afford, not what they need—except when the two coincide (which is admittedly pretty often).

iv. Economists agree that the trade cycle is aggravated by the reactions of uncontrolled private enterprise. The investment in capital goods follows the rise and fall of the cycle instead of being used to offset it. The tendency to embark on factory expansions, etc., during a boom and the stopping of all expansion when a slump threatens, accentuates the upward or downward trend. Since the trade cycle is the greatest single cause of mass unemployment (during which there is the greatest loss in human dignity and the largest fall in purchasing power) an economic system which so aggravates it is inevitably irresponsible.

#### B. *Secondary Responsibilities*

*The Workers.*—Responsibility to the shareholders does not necessarily guarantee a responsible attitude to the workers. The attitude of employers towards welfare, good working conditions, holidays with pay, etc., has improved. But on such questions as laying off men in slack times or of associating the workers' interest and co-operation in the general process of production (through Works Councils or Joint Production Committees) much needs to be done to educate opinion and no institutions or regulations exist to compel the necessary change of attitude. Even on general questions of welfare and wages, it is the

counter-action of Trade Unions rather than the action of those who exercise effective power that has secured a measure of responsibility in relation to the workers.

*Other Suppliers.*—There is no automatic check in our present system to prevent a group of suppliers abusing a monopoly position *vis-à-vis* a producer or a very important purchaser abusing the monopoly given it by the scale of its purchases.

*Shareholders.*—They are nominally the foundation of responsibility in private enterprise. In fact, they are very often sleeping partners. Many methods of publishing company accounts do not put them in a position to judge whether or not their interests are being properly safeguarded. Their passivity is an index of the extent to which even the nominal responsibility of private firms is a myth.

*The Community.*—1. In questions of foreign policy and defence, there is no guarantee that the trading arrangements of private firms will conform to the nation's interest. Vital raw materials are sold to the aggressor up to the eve of war.

2. England is strewn with the evidence of irresponsible industrialism. In general there is the problem of industrial location—e.g. the desertion of old industrial areas and the building up of such new agglomerations as Slough. In particular, there are nuisances such as slag tips, pollution of water, smoke nuisances, etc. There is no guarantee that a due regard for the profitability of an undertaking can ever cover these questions of amenity.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This paper is concerned with analysis. It simply seeks to establish the point that in a wide and important variety of cases the exercise of power in our economic system is irresponsible. If Christian thinking accepts this conclusion, it cannot shirk the need to find remedies. The problem of securing a responsible economic system is the storm centre of twentieth-century politics. It is the point where the strongest passions both of revolution and reaction are unleashed. Failure to achieve an interpretation of free society compatible with modern industrial society will lead inevitably to a totalitarian system of some kind. Thus the case for Christians devoting their attention to economic responsibility is overwhelming.

Again, real differences of opinion and conviction are involved at this point. Real sacrifices of power are demanded from those who have hitherto taken their position of privilege for granted. It is vital that Christians should avoid covering these points of conflict with a spurious unity and complacency, and should reach conclusions which they hold to be as binding on their conscience as the more accepted canons of personal behaviour.

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